## <u>YALI Network 2015: What a Year It's</u> Been!



2015 Mandela Washington Fellows at the Presidential Summit. (State Dept./D.A. Peterson)

Before the YALI Network says goodbye to 2015, let's cast a glance back to see the distance we've traveled in the last 12 months. Our voice grew louder and stronger, adding almost 100,000 members and making us over 200,000 strong.

Here are five YALI Network highlights from 2015 we're excited about:

- 1) YALI Network Online Courses: Some of the biggest news from the YALI Network's 2015 was the continued growth of the free YALI Network Online Courses and the launch of #YALILearns, the initiative that encourages Network members to share knowledge and learning in their communities and beyond. At the Mandela Washington Fellowship Town Hall, President Obama said, "Last year, I said we'd launch a new set of tools for our YALI Network. So today, we've got more than 30 online lessons available on everything from public speaking to how to write a business plan, mentoring, new ways to network across Africa, around the world, new training sessions, meetings with experts on how to launch a startup. And we're launching three new online Mandela Washington Fellowship Institute courses so that all members of the YALI Network can access some of the great ideas that you've been sharing." This year, 25,000 YALI Network members earned more than 50,000 certificates by completing online courses.
- 2) #Africa4Her: In March, more than a thousand YALI Network members from 47 countries

pledged to work to increase girls' opportunities in the classroom and women's opportunities in the workplace, while countless others pledged through Twitter using #Africa4Girls, including first lady Michelle Obama.

People around the world are taking action to #LetGirlsLearn. Pledge to invest in women and girls with  $\#Africa4Her \rightarrow http://t.co/DDUnhnTfAq$ 

- The First Lady (@FLOTUS) March 16, 2015
- **3) #YALIGoesGreen:** The end of 2015 saw the launch of **#YALIGOESGREEN**, in which YALI Network members committed to taking action on climate change. More than 9,000 people took the first step and earned their certificate in "<u>Understanding Climate Change</u>." Then 300 more network members shared highlights from events in their countries to support efforts to address climate change, thereby earning a **#YALIGOESGREEN** Green Champion certificate.
- **4) #YALIVotes:** In a year of landmark elections in Nigeria and Burkina Faso, the YALI Network reached out to its members in nations with upcoming votes to find out how they planned to inspire their communities to ensure free, peaceful and fair elections.

With citizens of several countries — including Benin, Niger and Uganda — heading to the polls, we'll be encouraging Network members to post to Facebook and Twitter to share why they think voting and civic engagement are important, using the #YALIVotes hashtag.





s at a #YALILearns session on fundraising in Abuja, Nigeria. (Courtesy photo)

**5)** This year we introduced <u>YALI Network Face2Face</u>, a place for YALI Network members around Africa to share ideas and plan in-person meetups. So far, more than 4,000 of you have attended Face2Face events, with many more to come in the next year.

YALI Network members also shared their own experiences and insights on social media and through the YALI Network blog. These included <u>an activist from Burkina Faso describing her country's struggle toward more open elections</u>, the president of the African Green Movement explaining smart agriculture and how something as simple as banana stems can be used to mitigate the effects of climate change, <u>a poet from South Africa sharing her pledge for #Africa4Her</u>, a young scientist from <u>Uganda checking in from the historic COP21 climate summit in Paris</u>, and more.

We look forward to more robust engagement from the YALI Network in 2016 as our growing numbers increase our reach and our ability to foster positive change.

## A Young African Leader's Perspective on COP 21

Peace visits COP21 exhibitions in Paris. (Photo courtesy Peace Sasha Musonge.)

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Peace Sasha Musonge is a 2015 Mandela Washington Fellow who attended the historic COP21 summit on climate change in Paris. During her Ph.D. study in biosciences, she has also attended the 2015 World Bank Group Youth Summit on climate change in Washington and debated the effects of climate change on the African continent on <u>Voice of America's Straight Talk Africa</u>.

In spite of the terror attacks that took place in Paris, I was not deterred from attending COP21. I went to Paris very charged and engaged since these were to be historic climate talks. Before the talks, INDCs were submitted by different member countries, showing a bottom-up and participatory approach. That meant that countries who pollute the most would map out a way to support the developing countries from continents such as Africa.

Arriving at Le Bourget in Paris at the start of the conference, I found a lot of liveliness and optimism in the Blue Zone, where country delegates, diplomats and scientists held discussions till late into the night. I met with some of the chief negotiators from East and Central Africa and got their view on the progress of the talks. Most of the negotiators were very optimistic that the outcome would favor climate adaptation in many African countries.

Peace Musonge stands outside a conference room at COP 21 named for environmentalist Wangari Maathai (Photo courtesy of Peace Musonge.)

As a young civic leader, I believe some of the most exciting engagement took place in the Green Zone here at COP21. I saw a lot of creativity and positive energy, especially from the youth groups in the Green Zone, where nongovernmental stakeholders, academics, civic organizations and business communities highlighted their climate change-based activities.

During the past two weeks, I networked with passionate climate activists from different parts of the globe, from young children to adults. What struck me the most was the strong representation of high school and university groups, for example, the China Youth Climate Action Network. It was comforting to know that young Chinese students are taking climate activism seriously.

One of the biggest side events at COP21 was the Global Landscapes Forum, with many sub-Saharan youth in attendance. They showcased amazing landscapes initiatives. One young graduate started a fruit-tree-planting initiative to combat climate change and youth unemployment. During the Africa Land of Business event, I was able to network with fellow African climate activists. The discussion focused on the Mayombe forest — which is known as the Amazon of Africa and spans four countries (Angola, Congo, DRC and Gabon). I had the privilege of sharing my current research on "south-to-south" cooperation to combat climate change with the Angolan environment minister. We discussed the opportunities for future collaboration between indigenous communities, like the Mayombe forest inhabitants and communities in the Amazon in South America, who are both fighting for their rights.

The passion and drive reflected in the civic society arena demonstrated to me that communities are willing to combat climate change, and I hope that the different governments live up to the promises they have stipulated in their INDCs, especially when it comes to funding Africa's climate adaptation and mitigation strategies.

I believe we should stop pointing fingers, since climate change has not been caused by a single factor, but by many different ones. As Africans, we should work collectively and strengthen and improve our climate and weather centers, especially in Dakar, Khartoum and Cape Town. As young people who make up over 80 percent of Africa's population, we are the generation who will face the effects of climate change in the coming years. We need to work in unity with both the public and private sector to promote green lifestyles and to leapfrog older technologies, as we did with the mobile phone revolution.

Act locally and think globally. Let's keep going green, and see you in Marrakech for COP22 in 2016!

The views and opinions expressed here belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the YALI Network or the U.S. government.

# What Climate Change Means for African Women



According to the U.N., women in sub-Saharan Africa spend an average of 40 billion hours a year collecting water. (© AP Images)

In Tanzania, because of drought, a girl must walk farther for water than her mother did years before. The extra time means she can't go to school.

In Mozambique, flooding leaves standing water in which mosquitoes breed. A malaria outbreak follows, in a place where the disease had not been seen before. A mother is more vulnerable to the sickness at the same time she must care for her sick family.



Women in Sesheke, Zambia, receive mosquito nets to prevent the spread of malaria. (© AP Images)

These aren't imagined scenarios. They're outcomes of weather patterns associated with climate change. And the U.N. and the World Health Organization say those changes impact women more than men, especially in developing countries.

"The impact of climate change on women is huge," Priscilla Achakpa, executive director of the Women Environmental Programme, told Vogue Magazine of her home country of Nigeria. "The men are forced to migrate and they leave the women, who are now the caregivers because they find they cannot leave the children."

Women "are among the most vulnerable to climate change," concludes a U.N. Population Fund report, "partly because in many countries they make up the larger share of the agricultural workforce and partly because they tend to have access to fewer income-earning opportunities."

"In Kenya, where I work," said environmentalist and 2015 Mandela Washington Fellow Asha Shaaban, "women walk up to 10 kilometers in search of water. This is time taken that could be used for other things. They could use that time to take care of children or bring income to the household." When combined with economic and social discrimination, climate change threatens women's rights to education, information, water, food, health care and freedom from violence, says Eleanor Blomstrom of the Women's Environment and Development Organization.

Blomstrom stresses the importance of involving women in the response to climate change — "from the local project level to the international policy level and everywhere in between. "At COP21 in Paris," she said, "the Women and Gender Constituency is showcasing solutions that are sustainable, women-led, safe, promote women's participation and do not increase potential for conflict."

## **Leadership and Sharing with #YALILearns**



Participants in a YALI Learns event on leadership training and land law in Mampong, Kumasi, Ghana (Courtesy of Oxford Bonsu)

Communities thrive on sharing and learning. #YALILearns is a Networkwide initiative that offers you the opportunity to build networks in your community with events organized by you or your fellow Network members and tailored to the topics that will make positive change where you live.

In Ghana, Oxford Bonsu, an active YALI Network member, used the YALI Network Online Course "Community Organizing for Action" as the basis for an event that brought together 45 chiefs of the Ashanti region to discuss laws of land use in their region and to explore ways their lands could be used as equity for business investment.

"I was humbled," Bonsu wrote on the YALI Network Face2Face page, "when one of the chiefs present pronounced the workshop unprecedented in the history of the traditional council."



Event organizer Joyce Ikpaahindi (left) with 2015 YALI Fellows Fatu Ogwuche and Benjamin Dankaka.(Courtesy Joyce Ikpaahindi)

Joyce Ikpaahindi, a YALI Network member in Nigeria, saw the need to develop in her community a stronger sense of how to engage effectively in public service to bring about change. She designed an event around the YALI Network Online Course "Strengthening Public Sector Service."

"To set up my event," Ikpaahindi said, "I first needed to find a suitable space to accommodate 21 people. My department at the Federal Ministry of Works was willing to provide the space and equipment needed to host the event."

Ikpaahindi also enlisted the support of two 2015 Mandela Washington Fellows, Fatu Ogwuche and Benjamin Dankaka, who shared their experiences on the Fellowship program and also their leadership experience in the Nigerian public sector. "Real-life examples and experiences shared by the Fellows proved to be quite popular with the participants," she said. "A good #YALILearns event should be as practical, engaging and hands-on as possible."

Both Ikpaahindi and Bonsu created their events by combining a relevant <u>YALI Network Online Course</u> with additional discussions and presentations from community leaders. The particulars of the program are up to you, since you know your community best — as long as you bring people together, share ideas and take away a resolve to create positive change.

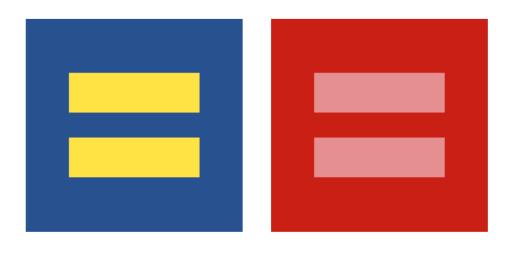
If you want to hold a #YALILearns event of your own, look at the <u>#YALILearns</u> page to learn more about how to facilitate your event and choose a topic that will most benefit your audience. A local partner such as a university or civic group can be useful in finding a venue for your event and helping you get the word out.

During your event, make sure to take pictures, and then let us know how it went at the <u>#YALILearns</u> <u>feedback</u> page so that we can share your success with the Network.

## **Amplifying Your Campaign Online**



Throughout the day of March 26, 2013, the marketing team at Human Rights Campaign (HRC) saw some startling numbers: a 600 percent increase in Web traffic, with 700,000 unique visitors in a 12-hour period, 86 percent of whom were new to the site. On Facebook, millions of users — including members of Congress and celebrities — had changed their profile images to a special red version of the HRC logo in what Facebook would later call the most successful viral campaign in their history.



HRC is the largest organization in the U.S. working toward LGBT equality, and March 26 was the day the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in the case that would make same-sex marriage legal throughout the country.

The campaign HRC mounted in the lead-up to that day is a case study in how to amplify a message and make a big impact. Maureen McCarty is the deputy director of marketing for HRC and was one of the people who designed the campaign. Here's what McCarty says a campaign must be to achieve success:

#### **Opportunistic**

"We really emphasize, as a marketing team, rapid response," McCarty said. "During the marriage-equality movement, HRC was frequently first out the door alerting members and supporters about important breaking news and positioning ourselves as thought leaders." Being opportunistic, she said, means tracking your field closely and being prepared to respond immediately when news breaks.

#### **Planned**

"When we launched our Equality Act," McCarty said, "about two months in advance we started with an extensive editorial calendar that outlined day by day the digital content that we were rolling out to get our audience excited around a particular hashtag and around the launch." McCarty points out that being opportunistic and being well-planned have to work in tandem. "Planning helps us to get ahead of the story, but we also have to adjust to where our audience is. As much as we emphasize an editorial calendar, we need to be flexible if there's news that day."

### **Innovative**

Online, innovation means finding ways to reach people where they're meeting. "HRC is on nearly every social media platform that's out there," said McCarty. "We make sure we're at the forefront of

the digital frontier and that we're putting out content on these platforms that is tailored to their audience and is really responding to what that audience is looking for."

#### **Authentic**

Authenticity means having a recognizable and credible voice. "A key to our strategy is bringing in influencers and validators to speak on behalf of our cause and to help reach out to an even broader network of people."

# 10 ways YALI Network members can help address climate change



This is a guest blog post by Kate Berrisford, Founder & Managing Director, Green Africa Directory – Africa's sustainability network. Visit <a href="https://www.greenafricadirectory.org">www.greenafricadirectory.org</a> to learn more.

Climate change affects us all and will continue to do so unless we collectively take actions now to reduce emissions. We are at a pivotal moment in time, where our actions now will have long-lasting impacts. We may also be the last generation that can stop climate change — this provides us with a huge opportunity to transition and transform our world to be more sustainable, resilient, equitable and livable.

While the business sector and government have important roles to play in accelerating action to prevent climate change, there are also many actions we can take on an individual level. Below is a list of 10 ways we can help address climate change. These relate to the sustainable consumption of resources — that is, finding ways of consuming more efficiently and in a less resource-intensive way.

### 10 things we can do to address climate change:

**Green your transport:** Consider using the most sustainable forms of transport available, including nonmotorized transport such as walking or cycling; public transport such as trains and buses; and carpooling, ride sharing or car share schemes.

**Use sustainable energy:** Using sustainable energy in your home helps prevent carbon emissions and has various co-benefits, like saving money. Renewable, clean and efficient energy sources for the home include solar cookers, solar water heaters, solar lights, biogas and clean cookstoves. Be energy-efficient through your choice of home appliances and use of energy.

**Support sustainable agriculture and diets:** Sustainable agriculture can help mitigate climate change and build food security. Support sustainably produced food (e.g., organic) and consider growing your own food or joining a community food garden. A major contributor to climate change is

the meat industry — cut down on meat or eliminate it from your diet to help prevent climate change.

Raise your voice and awareness: Get to know more about how climate change may affect you (including your health, livelihood and children), expand your knowledge by taking the "Understanding Climate Change" course, and then start conversations with others about climate change to help raise awareness and inspire action. Join local climate-change groups, attend climate events and talks, and engage your local political leaders to take bold, ambitious action on climate change.

**Build green:** There are many innovative, affordable and sustainable building techniques available across Africa. These include using sandbags, eco-bricks, hemp and straw bale. Retrofit your home to be more sustainable — <u>My Green Home</u> in South Africa is a practical example of how to do this on a household level.

**Plant trees and protect biodiversity:** Trees and forests provide carbon sinks and help mitigate climate change, while protecting biodiversity helps sustain vital ecosystem services (which include regulating climate). Plant trees, join or support tree-planting initiatives and events, donate a tree and support local nature-conservation initiatives.

**Save water:** Help conserve water in your home through using low-flow shower heads and waterless, low-flush or dual-flush toilets; have shorter showers; ensure your garden is water-wise and indigenous; collect and use rainwater; consider grey water recycling; and repair leaky taps.

**Protect oceans and coasts:** Oceans help reduce climate change by storing large amounts of carbon dioxide, and coastal ecosystems can help minimize the impacts of climate change. Protect healthy oceans by keeping them clean, taking part in beach cleanups and supporting sustainably sourced seafood.

**Collaborate and share:** There are many ways people collaborate that create opportunities to meet basic needs, while being resource-efficient and cutting down on GHG emissions. Some examples of the new collaborative or sharing economy include co-working, bike sharing, carpooling, crowdfunding and garden sharing.

**Support climate innovation:** Innovative technologies that will help us mitigate and adapt to climate change are becoming ever important in helping to accelerate climate action. Give your support to climate entrepreneurs and inventors to develop innovative technologies and ideas.

## <u>To protect the planet, we can all do our part</u>

plastics from the Saint Monica University Campus, Cameroon. (Photo courtesy Gabila Franklin Neba.)

Did you know small changes in your daily routines can make a huge difference to your health, the health of your neighbors and the future of the planet? Choose from among these simple steps and start today.

Join #YALIGoesGreen this month. Learn how to get involved at <u>vali.state.gov/climate</u>.

## When you run errands or travel ...

- Walk or ride a bike.
- Take public transportation.
- Organize errands into one trip.
- When driving, accelerate gradually and drive at lower speeds.
- Drive less, particularly on days with unhealthy air.

## When you are at home ...

What we do at home makes a big impact on air quality. Consuming less energy helps reduce air pollution, as does choosing sustainable, recyclable products. Limit use of chemicals that contribute to smog.

Did you know that detergents, cleaning compounds, glues, polishes and even cosmetics, perfume and deodorants contribute to smog? Such items contain volatile chemicals that evaporate readily. When the sun shines, they combine with other pollutants to form ozone, a primary component of smog that is bad for our health.

- Turn the lights off when you leave a room.
- Replace energy-hungry incandescent lights with energy-saving <u>CFLs</u> or <u>LEDs</u>.
- If alternative energy sources such as solar or wind are available, use them.
- Recycle paper, plastic and organic materials.
- Use nonpolluting stoves. Avoid using kerosene to cook, heat or provide light.
- Choose products made from recycled materials or sustainable sources such as bamboo, hemp and coconut fiber.
- Use durable, reusable shopping bags, not disposable plastic bags.
- Paint with a brush instead of a sprayer.
- Store all solvents in airtight containers.
- Eliminate use of toxic chemicals at home; opt for natural substitutes.
- Plant a tree to help purify the air.

## When you are at work ...

- Use natural light during the day.
- Work from home if possible.
- If you work in an office, start a recycling program. Print and photocopy on both sides of paper, and only print when necessary.
- Turn off office equipment (i.e., computers, printers and fax machines) after hours.

## When you are in your community ...

- Support efforts to "green" the neighborhood.
- Start an environmental program yourself.
- Let your elected representatives know you support action for cleaner air.

Adapted from the California Air Resources Board's "Simple Solutions to Help Reduce Air Pollution."

## **The Promise of Wind Power**

### Join #YALIGoesGreen this month. Learn how to get involved at yali.state.gov/climate

Solar, biofuels and hydropower are among the energy sources the United States has been developing aggressively since President Obama began the transition to a <u>clean energy economy</u> with his <u>Climate Action Plan</u>.

Wind, an energy technology with a long history, is another green power source with great potential. A new report from the U.S. Energy Department analyzes how the nation might increase its use of wind power.

Many African nations are also investing in wind power, which can, as the U.S. report says, "address key societal challenges such as climate change, air quality and public health, and water scarcity."

The Lake Turkana Wind Power Project in the north-east of Kenya aims to produce 20 percent of the country's electricity generating capacity when it comes online in 2016.

Ayitepa Wind Farm the east coast of Ghana and is also slated to come online in 2016 and promises to generate 10 percent of the country's generating capacity.

Issued in May, the almost-300-page report says the United States has tripled its use of wind power since 2008. Wind supplies 4.5 percent of the nation's electricity today, and the nation could set a realistic plan to meet 10 percent of the electricity demand in 2020, 20 percent in 2030, and 35 percent in 2050.

If the nation does reach that 2050 target, the report calculates considerable benefits:

- The nation's total electric bill would be 3 percent lower.
- Greenhouse gas emissions would drop by 14 percent.
- Using less fossil fuel would reduce pollutants such as sulfur dioxides, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter.
- Pollution-related deaths would be reduced by almost 22,000 between 2013 and 2050.
- The use of water would go down 23 percent as the nation became less dependent on fossil-fuel power plants, which use water as a cooling agent.

Beyond these calculable benefits, Wind Vision predicts adoption of more wind power also would put downward price pressure on fossil fuels in energy markets, saving consumers \$280 billion.

So if wind will give electricity for less money with less pollution, maybe wind power should be in your future too.

## <u>Telling Your Story Visually on Social</u> Media

Credit: Climate Action Campaign

When you're crafting a message on social media, creating a narrative is important to its success.

Tara McMahon is the digital creative director at Climate Action Campaign, where she focuses on telling the story of climate change and finding innovative ways to convey the detailed science of climate change.

"Given the nature of platforms like Facebook and Twitter," said McMahon, "images and graphics offer an important opportunity to engage the reader in your story."

We asked McMahon to offer the YALI Network her tips for incorporating compelling visuals into online campaigns.

### 1. Create a mini-campaign "brand" for a set of visuals.

Using consistent fonts, colors and design elements helps drive the overarching message visually.

#### 2. Pick the best approach for telling your story.

Info graphics are helpful for distilling finds in reports, photos are best for highlighting real-life impacts, and quotes and graphics are good for elevating direct stories.

### 3. Use your resources!

The Internet is full of free and low-cost resources: templates for infographics, free fonts, color palette generations, Creative Commons photos and more.

### 4. Think of visuals as a companion to your messaging.

For example, visuals can help tell a story about real-world local impacts of a global problem like climate change. It's important to start with a strong message you're looking to convey. Then visuals help give more context so you can craft a story that will really resonate with the viewer.

#### 5. Be creative!

Trying new things is the best way to determine what works with your audience. Test out using two different types of visuals that convey the same story and see which one engages people the most.

# Women's Situation Rooms: Women Protecting Women's Voting Rights

Liberians celebrate the inauguration of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

Liberia's 2011 election was the first to use a Women's Situation Room. (©AP Images)

While Nigerians went to the polls in March 2015 for what would prove to be <u>historic elections</u>, 40 young people in Abuja, mostly women, answered phones around the clock, fielding calls about outbreaks of violence and voter suppression.

Meanwhile, 300 female <u>election monitors</u> observed polls in 10 targeted Nigerian states, reporting irregularities back to Abuja. There, a team of eight eminent women from Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Senegal worked with political parties and religious groups to address threats of violence against women voters and women candidates as they happened.

Welcome to the Women's Situation Room. Nigeria's election was the most recent African election to benefit from a four-year-old idea that's been spreading throughout the continent. Originated during the 2011 presidential and legislative elections in Liberia to promote women's leadership development, the Women's Situation Room model has been replicated in Senegal, Sierra Leone, Mali and Guinea-Bissau.

Participants in Nigeria's Women's Situation Room during the March 2015 elections. (Courtesy U.S. Embassy Nigeria)

Studies show that women and children are the most likely to be affected by election violence, including efforts to prevent women from exercising their right to vote. Women's Situation Rooms employ women and youth to ensure access to the polls.

Among the desks in Nigeria's Women's Situation Room was one staffed with police representatives

and another with representatives from Nigeria's Independent Electoral Commission, allowing immediate response to outbreaks of violence and incidents of voter exclusion.

"If a situation happens in the field and we want answers from the police — like violence erupted in a certain state while [women] were taking part in the election — we respond by finding the particular arm of government, INEC or police, to tackle the situation. If they're in the room, it's of course easier and faster," Turrie Akerele Ismael, Nigeria's solicitor-general and one of the situation room's eminent women, reported to U.N. Women.

"Women and youth play an active role in sustaining peace before, during and after the elections," said Sylvie Ndongmo of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which coordinated the Women's Situation Room for the Nigerian election. When civic groups work with governmental agencies to reduce threats to voters and candidates, said Ndongmo, "the threat of electoral violence becomes an opportunity for promoting sustainable peace and democracy."